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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 5205  
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 9479  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 000038

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DEPT FOR AF/S

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SF](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MDC'S BENNETT HOPEFUL ON ANC CHANGES

REF: A. TRENKLE-WARREN EMAIL OF 12/21/2007

[B](#). 07 PRETORIA 4261 (NOTAL)

[C](#). 07 PRETORIA 3486 AND PREVIOUS

PRETORIA 00000038 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY. The MDC is hopeful that the election of Jacob Zuma as ANC President will lead to changes in South Africa's policy toward Zimbabwe, according to MDC Treasurer Roy Bennett. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai recently met with South African Community Party (SACP) leader Blade Nzimande, a key Zuma ally, who expressed sympathy for the MDC position and promised to arrange a meeting with Tsvangirai and Zuma. Nzimande also alleged that the USG funded Thabo Mbeki's ANC campaign. Bennett is struggling to raise funds for the MDC, but hopes that planned rallies in Zimbabwe and upcoming elections will refocus attention on Zimbabwe and the MDC. We do not expect any immediate changes in South Africa's policy toward Zimbabwe, but might see a shift over the medium to longer-term. Many Zuma allies, including Nzimande, are sympathetic to the MDC and will push for a new SAG approach to Zimbabwe. The MDC is also becoming more effective in lobbying their cause in South Africa. END SUMMARY.

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Upbeat on ANC Election  
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[2](#). (C) Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Treasurer Roy Bennett told PolOff January 4 that he was cautiously optimistic that South Africa's policy toward Zimbabwe would "change for the better" under newly-elected ANC leader Jacob Zuma. Bennett noted that Zuma and his key allies do not "carry the same baggage" on Zimbabwe as Mbeki's team. Bennett hoped, for example, that the ANC would send a separate team to observe the Zimbabwean elections, and that the ANC observation mission would include individuals from the trade union federation COSATU and the South African Community Party (SACP), both of which have been critical of Mugabe. (NOTE: Contrary to Bennett's hopes, Zuma defended Mbeki's policy of "quiet diplomacy" in Zimbabwe in his December 20 press remarks (ref A). END NOTE.)

[3](#). (C) MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai recently met with SACP General Secretary and Zuma ally Blade Nzimande, accompanied by MDC Secretary General Tendai Biti and Bennett. According to Bennett, Nzimande asked for an update on the South

African-led facilitation and expressed sympathy for the MDC position. Nzimande said he would arrange a meeting between Zuma and Tsvangirai.

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Nzimande Told MDC USG Funded Mbeki  
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¶4. (S/NF) Nzimande told Tsvangirai that the United States funded Thabo Mbeki's ANC reelection campaign, claiming that the United States did not want Jacob Zuma to become South Africa's president. Nzimande seemed very confident in his statement, even when questioned by Bennett on why the U.S. Government would take such a position. Bennett did not believe the allegation. (NOTE: Post heard the same report via Strive Masiyiwa, who had spoken with Tsvangirai (ref B). As noted in ref B, the ridiculous allegation about USG funding for Mbeki is evidence of the strong distrust of the United States among Zuma's leftist allies. END NOTE.)

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Fundraising Difficult  
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¶5. (C) Bennett admitted that the MDC has had difficulty raising funds to cover its operations and campaign strategy. The USD 1 million that Bennett raised from a group of donors QThe USD 1 million that Bennett raised from a group of donors (ref C) has been spent, mostly on MDC vehicles for each province, travel, retreats, training for Tsvangirai's personal security unit, and ongoing operations at Harvest House. Bennett was optimistic that planned MDC rallies in Zimbabwe over the next few weeks, culminating in a march in Harare at the end of January, would refocus international attention on the MDC. The upcoming elections would also make fundraising easier, Bennett claimed.

¶6. (S/NF) Asked about efforts to raise funds among the

PRETORIA 00000038 002.2 OF 002

Zimbabwean diaspora in South Africa, Bennett said it has been "very challenging." He said that Zimbabwean businessman Strive Masiyiwa (strictly protect) has promised the party USD 25,000 as an initial contribution, but the money has not yet "hit the MDC account." Tsvangirai and Bennett speak regularly with Masiyiwa, who is providing advice.

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Political Developments  
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¶7. (C) Bennett commented on other political developments in Zimbabwe:

-- Bennett made contradictory statements on the MDC threat to boycott the elections, saying the threat is "serious," but stressing that "the people want to vote." Bennett believes the election will take place in March.

-- Nothing has happened on the South African-led SADC facilitation since the December 16 meeting between Mbeki and the MDC leaders, according to Bennett. Bennett was not aware of future planned meetings, and was generally pessimistic on prospects for a positive outcome from the facilitation.

-- "Rumors are swirling" about the possible creation of a "third way" political force, Bennett said, to be led by former GOZ minister Simba Makoni. Ibbo Mandaza, the Mujurus, and possibly Welshman Ncube are reportedly involved in the initiative.

-- Talks with the pro-Senate MDC faction on unification are advanced, with as many as ten pro-Senate MPs ready to "return to the fold," Bennett claimed. He said that Welshman Ncube, Arthur Mutambara, and Fletcher Dulini-Ncube are pressing the MPs not to rejoin the Tsvangirai faction. Ncube and

Mutambara want a coalition, not reunification. Bennett noted that the Mutambara faction is "nervous" about the changes in South Africa, since they are closely connected to the "Mbeki team."

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Comment  
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18. (C) We are not as optimistic as Bennett that the election of Zuma will result in any immediate changes in South Africa's foreign policy toward Zimbabwe. However, several newly-elected ANC leaders and Zuma allies, including the SACP's Nzimande, have sharply criticized Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy and will push for a new SAG approach. In addition, the MDC, in part because of Treasurer Bennett's presence in Johannesburg, is beginning to play the South African political game more effectively, lobbying key players and reaching out to the influential Zimbabwean business diaspora.

Therefore, we may begin to see policy changes over the medium to long-term, especially if the GOZ cracks down on the MDC (as in March 2007) or when a new South African President takes office in 2009.

BOST